

REMARKS

Claims 1, 5-9, and 12-19 are presented for further examination. Claims 1 and 9 have been amended, claims 2 and 3 have been cancelled, and claims 17-19 are new.

In the final Office Action mailed September 9, 2005, the Examiner rejected claims 1, 2, 5, and 6 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,883,537 (“Luoni et al.”). Claims 1, 3, 9, and 12 were rejected as anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 4,777,386 (“Majumdar”). Claims 7, 8, and 13-16 were found to be allowable.

Applicant respectfully disagrees with the bases for the final rejection and requests reconsideration and further examination of the claims.

Withdrawal of Final Rejection

In response to the applicant’s first Amendment filed on June 29, 2005, the Examiner cited a new reference, Luoni et al., U.S. Patent No. 5,883,537. This is the first instance the Luoni et al. reference has been cited in this application. Applicant’s Amendment did not require a new search because the amendments to the claims were subject matter taken from canceled dependent claims. In view of the foregoing, applicant submits that the Office Action mailed September 9, 2005, should have been a second, non-final office action. Accordingly, applicant respectfully requests that the Examiner withdraw the finality of the Office Action mailed September 9, 2005.

Response to Claim Rejections

Claim 1 has been amended to include the limitations of dependent claims 2 and 3. As such, independent claim 1 is now allowable over both Luoni et al. and Majumdar. More particularly, the Examiner found claim 2 to be allowable over Majumdar and claim 3 to be allowable over Luoni et al. Because claim 1 now includes both dependent claims, it is allowable over both of these references.

Dependent claims 5 and 6 are allowable for the features recited therein as well as for the reasons why claim 1 is allowable.

Claim 9 was rejected over the Majumdar reference only. Applicant has incorporated the limitations of claim 2 into independent claim 9. Inasmuch as claim 2 was found to be allowable over the Majumdar reference claim 9 is now allowable over Majumdar.

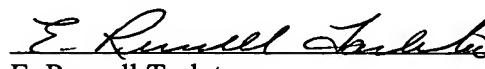
New claim 17 is directed to a circuit in which a bipolar transistor has its base terminal coupled to a first terminal of a MOS transistor via a Zener diode that has its anode terminal coupled to the base terminal of the bipolar transistor and the cathode terminal coupled to the first terminal of the MOS transistor. Claim 17 further recites the emitter terminal of the bipolar transistor coupled to the first terminal of the MOS transistor at a first node, to which the cathode of the Zener diode is connected, and the Zener diode has a lower Zener voltage than a breakdown voltage between the base terminal of the bipolar transistor and its emitter terminal. Applicant respectfully submits that claim 17 is allowable over the references cited and applied by the Examiner for the reasons why claims 1 and 9 are allowable. Claims 18 and 19 are allowable for the features recited therein as well as for the reasons why claim 17 is allowable.

In view of the foregoing, applicant respectfully submits that all of the claims in this application are now clearly in condition for allowance. In the event the Examiner finds minor informalities that can be resolved by telephone conference, the Examiner is urged to contact applicant's undersigned representative by telephone at (206) 622-4900 in order to expeditiously resolve prosecution of this application. Consequently, early and favorable action allowing all of these claims is respectfully solicited.

The Director is authorized to charge any additional fees due by way of this Amendment, or credit any overpayment, to our Deposit Account No. 19-1090.

Respectfully submitted,

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